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S/CT FOR EMILY GOLDMAN

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SUBJECT: ITALIAN POLICE, TERRORIST FINANCING, AND CT
AMBASSADORS FUND

REF: STATE 19846

¶1. (SBU) This cable contains a proposal for support from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Counterterrorism from the U.S. Mission in Italy.

Proposed Project

¶2. (SBU) Educational Initiative for Italian Police Task Force on Terrorism and Organized Crime.

Executive Summary

¶3. (SBU) More than one million of Italy's approximately four million immigrants are located in the Lombardy region, and a majority of these immigrants are Muslims, primarily from North Africa but also from Muslim majority states such as Pakistan and Albania. The city of Milan is the regional capital of Lombardy and Italy's financial and banking center. One of Italy's primary law enforcement agencies, the Guardia di Finanza (Guards of Finance or GDF), is actively involved in investigations of terrorist financing in the Milan area. For example, financing for the Mumbai terrorist attack in December 2008 was provided by a Pakistani immigrant from Brescia, the second largest city in the Lombardy region. This individual was part of a larger enterprise with close ties to Milan. The FBI's Legal Attache office in Milan is working closely with the GDF on this case and a number of other significant joint investigations and investigative initiatives.

¶4. (SBU) In general, as a government and a society, Italy has not tackled its "second generation" phenomenon of Muslim immigrants, and the country's tendency to treat the phenomenon solely as a security threat has led to isolation and alienation of some immigrant communities. Recent conversations with senior Interior Ministry officials (septels) responsible for training Italian police, however, suggest there is a growing recognition of the need to educate Italy's law enforcement officials about Islam and Arab culture in order to improve their effectiveness in working in these immigrant communities. Colonel Ricardo Raffanotti, the commandant of Milan's GDF Task Force on Terrorism and Organized Crime (Gruppo di Investigazione sulla Criminalita Organizzata), is seeking U.S. financial support and expertise to launch a pilot education program for 25 Task Force officers responsible for investigating terrorist financing. (Note: The Milan GDF Task Force consists of 120 officers.

The other officers are responsible for handling crimes related to the Mafia, although there may be connections between terrorists and the Mafia, particularly in the trafficking of drugs and humans. End Note.) The purpose of the program is to enable the GDF Task Force to improve its communication and working relationships with Muslim immigrant communities in Milan by arming the officers with the necessary factual and cultural background to earn the trust and collaboration of immigrants rather than alienating them.

Explanation of Proposal

15. (SBU) Recognizing the need to improve its understanding and outreach, the Milan branch of the GDF Task Force took the initiative to enlist the expertise of Professor Paolo Branco, an assistant professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at Catholic University in Milan, author of four books on Islam, and an experienced lecturer to European audiences on Islamic radicalism. The GDF also turned to Martino Pillitteri, a journalist and editor of "Yalla Italia" (Let's Go Italy), a Milan newsweekly that seeks to inform Italians about Islamic and Arab cultures. Working with the GDF, these experts designed a proposed educational program of ten three-hour sessions covering the following subjects: Islam as a Civilization and Religion; Islam: Religion and Society; Islam: Rules and Laws; The Political and non-Political Language of Islam; Second Generation -- Communication Techniques and Interpretation of Cultural Signals; Islamic Terrorism; Money-Laundering and Terrorism Financing; Islamic Finance and Jihad Financing; Islam on the Web (Cyberterrorism). The GDF has specifically requested a U.S.

expert to share expertise on money-laundering and terrorism financing. (The U.S. mission in Italy has identified a proposed candidate, Kevin Favreau, a vice president of global anti-money laundering compliance for Western Union, who lectures on cash couriers and hawalas for the Foreign Service's course on Combating Terrorist Financing.) The other lectures will be presented by Italian academics and specialists from Milan and Bologna. In addition to improving the GDF's engagement with immigrant communities, the Task Force seeks to better understand the characteristics of the banking and financial systems in the Muslim world. With this knowledge they will be better-armed to identify and disrupt terrorist financing. They envision holding two sessions a week for five weeks.

Contact Officer

16. (SBU) The contact officers are Karl Soete, Office of the FBI Legal Attache, U.S. Consulate, Milan; and Molly Phee, RSI officer, U.S. Embassy, Rome.

Planned Start Date

17. (SBU) The GDF is prepared to organize the educational program as soon as funding is confirmed.

Estimated Total Cost

18. (SBU) The estimated total cost is \$7,830 broken down by the following estimates: the cost for travel, accommodations and M&IE for the U.S. expert is \$3,500; the cost for air transport for Italian academics and experts to and from Milan is \$600; the cost for hotels and M&IE for the Italian academics and experts is \$800; the cost for local transportation costs within Milan is \$465; the cost for publishing a paper on the program is \$465; and the professional honoraria for the seven speakers is \$2000. The GDF will provide an interpreter for the U.S. expert.

Target audiences

¶9. (SBU) The primary target audience is the Milan branch of the GDF. Important secondary audiences include other Italian branches of the GDF; other Italian law enforcement agencies; and French, Spanish and other European GDF counterparts. Because many terrorists based in Europe travel through Italy to other European countries or collaborate with terrorists based in other European countries, there is a well-established pattern of cooperation between the GDF and its counterpart security services that would be positively affected by improvements in the Italian approach. By acquiring this expertise, the GDF also seeks to improve its cooperation with Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Past requests by the GDF for investigative cooperation with the security services in these countries have not been fruitful.

Effectiveness Measures, Dissemination

¶10. (SBU) In addition to the immediate goal of improving the effectiveness of the GDF Task Force in preventing terrorist financing, the U.S. mission in Italy believes funding of this modest project could kickstart a more systematic and effective official Italian response to its "Second Generation" dilemma. Italy is at a critical crossroads in responding to immigration challenges. This GDF initiative is the first official effort by the Italian security services to expand Italy's traditional "law and order" approach to Islamic terrorism into an approach that includes counter-radicalization activities purposely designed to improve the security services' engagement with Muslim immigrant communities. Given Milan's prominence in the banking and financial sector and the presence of a large Muslim immigrant community in Milan, the city is an ideal showcase for this positive shift in approach. Task Force Commandant Raffanotti has provided his commitment to the mission's office of the FBI legal attache in Milan to share this program initiative and its results with his colleagues

in the GDF and other Italian law enforcement agencies to encourage its replication with GOI support. The mission has worked previously with Branca and Pillitteri, who are well and favorably known to us for their counter-radicalization and educational efforts. We believe this initiative merits our support as a pilot effort to expose Italian authorities to the concrete benefits of adapting current Italian policies and actions that may inadvertently contribute to radicalization.

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